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DIA review
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State Dept review
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
9 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

**(Situation Report Number 17
As of 2230 EDT)**

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

1. Fighting has tapered off during the evening hours after a day of heavy engagement. Neither side has achieved a decisive breakthrough.

2. The optimism expressed in yesterday's official Israeli military communiqués and press reports has been replaced by a more restrained mood. Although still confident, the Israelis acknowledge that they are involved in a war very different than the six-day conflict of 1967. According to the US defense attaché in Tel Aviv, the Israelis are becoming increasingly concerned over tank and artillery ammunition shortages, and steadily mounting casualties and equipment attrition. In addition, they are expressing frustration at the Arabs seemingly limitless stocks.

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THE SYRIAN FRONT

3. Relative calm prevailed in the Golan Heights late this evening after a day of hard, but apparently indecisive, fighting. The Israeli state radio reported that some fighting between Syrian and Israeli tank units continued as late as 2200 hours local time. The Israelis flew 80 sorties over Lebanon, Northern Israel, Jordan, and the Golan Heights during the evening.

4. According to press sources, the Israelis were counterattacking early this evening near Qunaytirah. Syrian forces, supported by air power, apparently recaptured the town earlier today. An Israeli situation report estimates that the Syrian Air Force flew some 85 ground support sorties during the day. A UN Truce Supervisory source indicated that Syrian forces were still in Qunaytirah at 1830 hours local time, but the Israelis had taken major terrain features about three kilometers west of the town.

5.

the Syrians have lost an estimated 600 tanks since fighting began.

6. The Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the Israeli forces along the border had been strengthened during the past 48 hours. Reinforcements include tank units and airborne units. King Husayn has been reported to be visiting Jordanian Army units deployed along the border with Israel.

THE EGYPTIAN FRONT

7. The situation along the Egyptian front remains confused, with neither side claiming major breakthroughs. An Egyptian armed forces communiqué claims the capture of the second largest town in the Sinai, Kantar Eastern, as well as large quantities of arms and ammunition, including an unspecified

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number of Israeli tanks. About 30 prisoners were also taken. The earlier Egyptian claim that the Israeli 190th tank brigade had been captured by Egyptian forces was confirmed when the brigade's commander, Colonel Assaf Yagouri, was shown to newsmen in Cairo. In other ground action, the Israelis admitted that they have given up most of their positions along the Bar Lev line, but said that these forces have set up new lines some three to five kilometers from the canal. The Egyptians, however, claim to have penetrated about 20 kilometers into the Sinai. The Israelis also admitted that Israeli ground and air forces thus far have been unable to stop the reinforcement of Egyptian units on the east bank of the Suez Canal.

8. Israeli aircraft have also been active around Port Said. Egyptian diplomatic sources claimed these airstrikes destroyed civilian buildings and homes, and inflicted a number of civilian casualties. According to Israeli sources, the main Egyptian air activity has been in support of ground action.

9. In naval action, the Israelis claim to have sunk three Egyptian Osa class missile patrol boats in an engagement midway between Port Said and Alexandria, without loss of any of their own patrol boats.

UN OBSERVATION POSTS

10. UN sources in Jerusalem reported that about noon 9 October, UN observation posts Silver and Orange--located at the north and south ends of the Great Bitter Lake--had been overrun by Egyptian forces who were enlarging their bridgeheads in the Sinai. All UN observation posts in the Suez sector apparently are now closed.

THE ISRAELI SCENE

that when the high casualties and material losses suffered by the IDF are revealed, Israeli bitterness will be intensified and public pressure for ground strikes into Egypt and Syria will likely mount. The government is being increasingly criticized--albeit

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quietly--by some elements of the public for its failure to launch a pre-emptive military strike or for not at least having mobilized earlier.

12. Israeli Finance Minister Sapir told a government economic committee on Tuesday that thus far the war has cost Israel nearly one billion dollars. The government imposed a compulsory tax loan of \$238 million today to help finance the conflict. Israelis will contribute to the loan by automatic deductions from their income. Individuals will be assessed 7 to 12 percent of their income and business firms will pay 9 percent of their profits to the loan. The loan is to be repaid over 15 years with interest. Israelis already subscribe to a compulsory defense loan from previous Arab-Israeli wars.

13. In East Jerusalem, the mood of the Arab population remains outwardly calm, but the US consul has detected a sense of both elation and unease over the successes of the Arab armies. Many Arab shops in the city as well as the occupied West Bank remain closed and most Arab workers have not returned to their jobs in the Jewish sector of Jerusalem. Tensions reportedly have flared in a few spots on the West Bank, primarily as a result of accidents caused by Israeli tanks and other equipment rushing to the Syrian front.

EGYPT

14. Senior Egyptian officials briefing foreign ambassadors in Cairo continue to insist that Cairo's military operations across the Suez Canal into Israeli-occupied Sinai are counterattacks in response to Israeli attacks on the Gulf of Suez on 6 October.

15. A senior Egyptian official [redacted] ambassador on 7 October that Cairo had become convinced over recent weeks that Tel Aviv was seriously planning a new round of hostilities, most likely to occur before the Israeli elections later this month. He professed to see evidence of this in the 13 September air battle with Syria, alleged Israeli troop concentrations particularly on the borders with Syria and Lebanon, and

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[redacted]

in belligerent and threatening statements by senior Israeli officials. He also cited recent setbacks for Israel on the international scene, such as Zaire's decision to break diplomatic relations and Austria's move to close the Schoenau transit facility, as increasing the psychological pressure on Tel Aviv to go on the offensive again. Thus, according to the Egyptian official, President Sadat ordered the counter-attack across the Suez Canal when Israeli air and sea-borne forces allegedly struck on two points on the Gulf of Suez.

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16. [redacted] the Egyptians frankly acknowledged that Cairo would nevertheless have a difficult time convincing world public opinion that Israel had touched off hostilities. One official remarked, however, that it didn't really "matter a damn" what the world chose to believe; Egypt was only trying to take back its own territory.

SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

17. Another large landing craft has joined the seven Soviet naval ships that were at the Kithera anchorage. The ships are now trailing a six-ship US force that is in a holding area south of Crete. Late information indicates that a guided missile destroyer is still in Alexandria and will probably remain there along with the eight remaining auxiliary ships. The Soviets also have a fleet minesweeper west of Latakia, but this ship is well removed from any fighting. The group of submarines that were recently relieved of duty have left the Mediterranean and are now off the Portuguese coast. The relief submarines are proceeding eastward in the Mediterranean and are now north of Tunisia.

SOVIET POLITICAL ACTIVITY

18. The Soviets continue to be active diplomatically in many Arab capitals. In Cairo, Ambassador Vinogradov had his fourth meeting with President Sadat in as many days. Ambassador Azimov spent 90 minutes with Palestinian leader Arafat in Beirut. According

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to fedayeen radio, Azimov carried an "important message" to Arafat from Soviet leaders. In Sana, the Soviet ambassador met with President Iryani to reiterate Moscow's support for the Arab cause.

19. In Moscow today, however, there was considerably less public play given Middle East developments. News of the fighting was put on the inside pages of the major newspapers, and Premier Kosygin referred to the crisis only briefly in his speech at the luncheon for visiting Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka.

EASTERN EUROPE

20. Reaction from Eastern Europe has followed predictable lines. Moscow's allies have generally followed the Soviet lead and issued relatively mild condemnations of Israeli "aggression."

The Romanian press has offered even-handed treatment of the hostilities that is consistent with Bucharest's past positions. President Tito, according to press reports, has sent a personal message of support to President Sadat and has said that he will seek to rally the nonaligned states against Israel.

SAUDI ARABIA

22. All Saudi Army and National Guard members on leave were directed today to rejoin their units "to fulfill their sacred duty." At Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia, ten Saudi Air Force Lightnings equipped with air-to-air missiles are standing by, are deployed, If the Lightnings they may head for Tabuk near the Saudi-Jordanian border.

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JORDAN

23. According to a sensitive state department cable, Jordan's King Husayn last night repeated his plea to the US ambassador that the US work within the UN Security Council for a simple, unconditional cease-fire. Husayn judges that only a cease-fire can end the intense pressure on him to involve Jordan in the fighting. Husayn is especially fearful that continued hostilities will prompt Saudi Arabia to enter the fray, worsen Saudi-Jordanian relations, and lead King Faysal to end his critically important financial and diplomatic support for Jordan.

24. King Husayn told the US ambassador tonight that he understands that Iraq is sending or has sent an entire armored division to the Golan Heights area.

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ARAB STATES

25. [redacted] Morocco is committed to sending a contingent of 2,500 troops to Egypt. This force is equipped and ready to be transported tonight. Moroccan and Algerian aircraft will be used. Tunisia and Algeria have been asked to allow overflights and provide refueling facilities.

26. Tunisia's President Bourguiba tonight made a farewell speech to troops "proceeding to the battlefield in the Middle East," and pledged that Tunisia will participate "with the resources it possesses."

[redacted] that Bourguiba expects that the war will not last long, and that Tunisian troops will in reality not have to leave Tunisia. Present plans are for the detachment to move slowly from northern Tunisia toward the south by land with the intention of crossing Libya into Egypt.

UNITED NATIONS

27. News from the UN has focused on the mutual recriminations resulting from Israeli air attacks on the Damascus and Cairo areas. Israel

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apologized for causing civilian casualties, but Soviet Permanent Representative Malik, who was incensed by apparently erroneous Western press accounts of Soviet casualties, blasted the Israelis and then walked out in the midst of Ambassador Tekoah's attempt to apologize.

28. Information from the British Embassy in Damascus confirms that it was the Soviet cultural center--and not the embassy--that was hit. Moreover, the latest press reports from Damascus quote official Syrian sources as denying that any Russians were killed. According to the Syrians, only the center's Syrian director and several Syrians who were studying Russian were wounded.

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